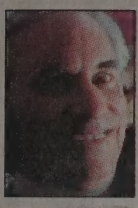
11/29/03
Gazette



ARMSTRONG

ROBINSON

Springs rector leading voice in hot debate

Episcopalian Armstrong fiercely opposes gay clergy

By PAUL ASAY
THE GAZETTE

The Rev. Donald Armstrong isn't interested in making nice. Not with the future of the Episcopal Church at stake.

Armstrong is rector of the 2,300-member Grace and St. Stephens Episcopal Church in downtown Colorado Springs. He's executive director of the Anglican Communion Institute, an orthodox group within the international Anglican Communion, of which the national Episcopal Church is a part.

Armstrong, 54, has become a leading Episcopalian rabble-rouser since openly gay V. Gene Robinson was elected bishop in New Hampshire during the summer.

"It's Halloween every day up in Denver as far as I'm concerned with both those bishops. They're dressed up like it. They look like it. They're sitting in the office of the bishop. But they're not under the authority of the Anglican Communion . . ."
THE REV. DONALD ARMSTRONG – on Bishop William Winterrowd and Bishop Rob O'Neill

Armstrong, who was raised in Massachusetts and has been with Grace 16 years, is not the only Episcopalian speaking out against gay clergy.

Few, however, are as unapologetic, and few have spoken to such large audiences.

Armstrong has been on Fox News' "O'Reilly Factor." He's been on National Public Radio twice and has talked with dozens of reporters across the country. He's passionate, uncompromising and quotable.

"My basic personality formed in Cambodia and Laos and Vietnam," said Armstrong, who was a helicopter pilot in Vietnam in 1970 and 1971. "I tend to fly right into my targets and not to blink."

Not necessarily what you'd expect from this soft-spoken minister, married with two grown children.

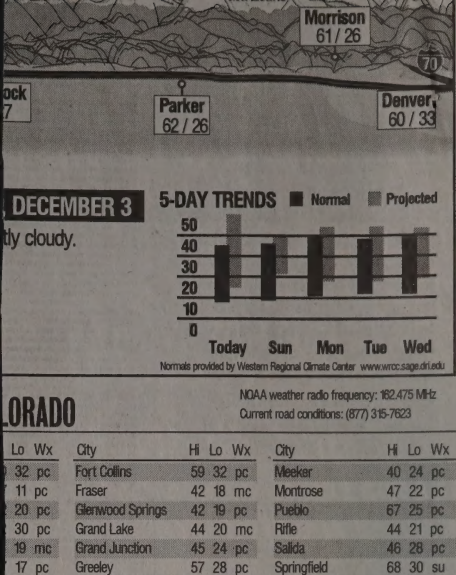
Bishop Alpha Mohamed of Tanzania, who's visiting Grace for a year, met Armstrong when the two attended Virginia Theological Seminary and has known him for 27 years. "He is a very kind man, a gentle man," he said.

People involved in the debate know him as something else: an ideological pit bull.

Condoning homosexuality is the equivalent of "telling children it's OK to play out in Tejon Street in the traffic," Armstrong has said. He likens following the Protestant Episcopalian Church down this road to following Lt. William Calley into the My Lai massacre.

"What you're seeing with Donald Armstrong

SEE ARMSTRONG • PAGE 8



DECEMBER 3

tly cloudy.

5-DAY TRENDS ■ Normal ■ Projected

Normals provided by Western Regional Climate Center www.wrcc.sage.dri.edu

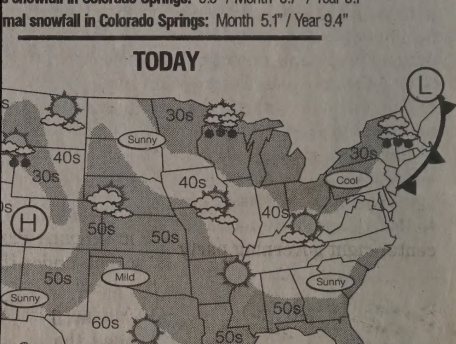
LORADO

NOAA weather radio frequency: 162.475 MHz
Current road conditions: (877) 315-7623

Lo	Wx	City	Hi	Lo	Wx	City	Hi	Lo	Wx
32	pc	Fort Collins	59	32	pc	Meeker	40	24	pc
11	pc	Fraser	42	18	mc	Montrose	47	22	pc
20	pc	Glenwood Springs	42	19	pc	Pueblo	67	25	pc
30	pc	Grand Lake	44	20	mc	Rifle	44	21	pc
19	mc	Grand Junction	45	24	pc	Salida	46	28	pc
17	pc	Greeley	57	28	pc	Springfield	68	30	su
29	su	Gunnison	37	12	pc	Steamboat Spgs	37	22	mc
25	pc	Hayden	38	25	mc	Sterling	61	29	pc
19	mc	La Junta	63	30	su	Trinidad	63	29	su
33	pc	Lamar	64	26	su	Vail	47	23	mc
15	su	Leadville	40	23	mc	Walsenburg	64	28	su
20	pc	Limon	61	25	su	Wheat Ridge	63	27	pc

riday's statewide extremes: 55 at Denver / -16 at Fraser
Friday's high and low in Colorado Springs: 44 / 7
cipitation in Colorado Springs: 0.00" / Month 0.04" / Year 12.36"
precipitation in Colorado Springs: Month 0.46" / Year 15.87"
s snowfall in Colorado Springs: 0.0" / Month 0.7" / Year 0.7"
mal snowfall in Colorado Springs: Month 5.1" / Year 9.4"

TODAY



USA

TODAY Hi	Lo	Wx	SUNDAY Hi	Lo	Wx	City	TODAY Hi	Lo	Wx	SUNDAY Hi	Lo	Wx
42	28	fl	44	28	pc	Kansas City, MO	53	35	su	52	31	pc
55	32	su	59	36	pc	Knoxville, TN	38	28	su	51	34	su
53	31	su	59	32	su	Las Vegas, NV	62	43	pc	64	43	pc
21	18	mc	25	7	fl	Little Rock, AR	54	36	su	60	40	su
53	28	su	58	37	su	Los Angeles, CA	71	53	pc	69	54	pc
56	29	pc	54	33	pc	Louisville, KY	43	33	pc	54	34	pc
55	40	su	69	48	su	Memphis, TN	49	37	su	57	40	su
58	29	su	54	34	pc	Miami, FL	68	59	pc	74	63	pc
54	29	mc	46	24	pc	Milwaukee, WI	41	31	pc	46	25	su
59	31	su	59	38	su	Minneapolis, MN	38	27	mc	38	16	su
54	22	mc	41	11	pc	Montgomery, AL	55	30	su	62	38	su
54	31	r	44	38	mc	Nashville, TN	45	32	su	56	36	pc
60	35	pc	50	36	pc	New Orleans, LA	55	38	su	65	46	su
54	32	fl	42	30	pc	New York, NY	53	39	pc	52	39	pc
58	29	pc	44	28	pc	Newark, NJ	48	34	pc	51	36	pc
59	29	su	59	34	su	Norfolk, VA	52	36	su	59	39	su
52	30	su	60	37	su	North Platte, NE	60	26	pc	50	16	sh
60	27	mc	52	34	pc	Oklahoma City, OK	58	35	su	59	35	su
60	29	su	56	37	su	Omaha, NE	51	32	pc	51	24	pc
58	32	pc	46	27	pc	Orlando, FL	58	39	su	70	47	su
59	34	pc	47	26	pc	Philadelphia, PA	47	32	pc	52	36	pc
57	28	mc	51	32	pc	Phoenix, AZ	73	48	pc	77	52	su
53	33	mc	45	28	pc	Pittsburgh, PA	37	30	mc	44	30	mc
59	28	su	63	35	su	Portland, ME	45	24	mc	47	29	pc
52	32	su	62	40	su	Portland, OR	51	36	mc	48	38	pc
52	29	mc	47	31	mc	Raleigh, NC	49	27	su	60	34	su
61	43	su	65	46	su	Rapid City, SD	59	30	pc	48	22	su
58	38	su	66	43	su	Reno, NV	51	36	r	54	33	mc
52	32	pc	46	23	su	Sacramento, CA	55	47	r	59	48	r
52	33	mc	49	28	pc	St. Louis, MO	48	37	su	55	35	pc
52	18	pc	29	6	su	Salt Lake City, UT	48	34	mc	49	34	mc
52	39	su	65	39	su	San Antonio, TX	65	41	su	69	51	su
54	34	su	51	34	pc	San Diego, CA	68	52	pc	69	54	su
20	-13	fl	-3	-20	fl	San Francisco, CA	60	51	r	62	53	r
52	16	mc	31	8	su	San Jose, CA	62	50	r	67	51	th
52	21	su	57	28	pc	San Juan, PR	84	74	su	84	74	su
52	32	mc	45	26	pc	Santa Fe, NM	50	28	su	56	29	pc
52	49	pc	63	45	mc	Seattle, WA	48	38	pc	47	38	pc
52	27	su	51	25	mc	Sioux Falls, SD	42	26	pc	42	15	su
52	28	mc	45	26	pc	Spokane, WA	42	26	pc	36	26	pc
52	23	pc	38	12	su	Springfield, IL	50	34	su	55	33	pc
52	29	pc	48	30	pc	Tampa, FL	62	41	su	69	47	su
52	25	mc	38	25	mc	Topeka, KS	54	33	su	53	30	pc
72	th		83	70	pc	Tucson, AZ	74	45	su	77	46	su
40	su		71	53	su	Washington, DC	50	34	su	54	37	pc
31	pc		48	31	mc	Wichita, KS	55	35	su	55	31	pc
28	su		64	36	su	Wilmington, DE	46	31	pc	51	33	pc

emes nationwide: 86 at Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. / -16 at Fraser, Colo.

ARMSTRONG: Considers split in church imminent

FROM PAGE 1

is someone who's taken a lot of initiative," said Bruce Mason, director of communications for the American Anglican Council, a group that opposes gay clergy. "It just shows the kind of passion (he has)."

"He's very significant in the discussion," said Tom Minnery, vice president of public policy for Focus on the Family, which opposes gay clergy. "We're pleased that someone such as Don Armstrong has taken such a strong position."

Some would say Armstrong's conservative ideology is cut of place in Episcopalianism, regarded as one of the nation's more tolerant Protestant denominations.

Armstrong admits his opinions and prominence make some Episcopalians uncomfortable — including some in his congregation.

One member told him he doesn't like seeing Armstrong's name in The New York Times.

Armstrong keeps talking.

"The reason I do that is to keep this topic on the table," he said, "because the desire of the liberals is that most people won't care.

"The church has never, never interpreted Scripture in this way. Nor does the church currently interpret Scripture this way," he said. "Homosexual practices are contrary to Scripture."

Armstrong believes he's following Scripture. He says the American Episcopalian leadership isn't — and that includes William Winterrowd, bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Colorado, and Bishop Rob O'Neill, who will take over Winterrowd's post in January.

"It's Halloween every day up in Denver as far as I'm concerned with both those bishops," Armstrong said. "They're dressed up like it. They look like it. They're sitting in the office of the bishop. But they're not under the authority of the Anglican Communion. And they're professing a false teaching."

Although O'Neill supports gay clergy and same-sex marriages, the bishop-elect does not want to act unilaterally and has promised not to change diocesan policies for at least six months after his consecration.

"The reason I said that is because these issues are important," O'Neill said. "And they do require our greatest care and thought."

He said he's committed to finding common ground within the diocese and has set up a task force to clarify issues that must be addressed. He says far more unites Episcopalians than divides them.

Armstrong said there is no common ground on this issue.

"We're not interested in private conscience," he said. "We, as an ordained people, are under orders for what the church teaches. And the church teaches, what the Anglican community teaches, is that homosexual practice — any sexual practice outside the bonds of holy matrimony — is wrong."

Armstrong believes a split in the church is imminent. He's confident the archbishop will side with the church's more orthodox elements, which, he said, represent the majority of the Anglican Communion.

"If the archbishop of Canterbury comes down on the side of the liberals, the rest of the communion will leave, and he'll be the archbishop of a dying North American denomination instead of a worldwide communion," he said. "And I would have to stick with the worldwide communion."

He's still not blinking.

Nobody Beats Ame

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The gifts p

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